SOME REFLECTIONS

On that part of a Book called

AMYNTOR,

OR THE

Defence of Milton's *Life*,

Which relates to the WRITINGS of the

Primitive Fathers

And the CANON of the

New Testament.

In a Letter to a Friend.

LONDON,

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SIR,

THE Design which the Author of the *defence of Milton's Life* professes that he had, in writing that part of his Book which relates to the Writings of the Primitive Fathers, and the Canon of the New Testament, was only to vindicate himself from the Charge of *denying the Scripture and declaring his doubt that several pieces under the name of Christ and his Apostles, recieved now by the whole Christian Church, are suppositious*; by shewing that what he had said in the Life of *Milton*, concerning the spuriousness of *several pieces under the name of Christ and his Apostles*, was meant not of those Writings which are *now received by the whole Christian Church*, but of those Apocryphal Pieces,

which were in many places received *and approved in the Primitive Times.* This is what the Author profeſſes to be the only deſign of this part of his Book: And though for his own ſake I cannot but heartily wiſh it were really no other; yet becauſe there are ſeveral Paſſages, wherein he either ſo expreſſes the very ſlight eſteem that he has for the Primitive Fathers, as ſeems to reflect upon our Religion it ſelf; or raiſes ſuch doubts about the authority of the Canon of the New Teſtament, as *Hereticks* (to uſe his own words) *may draw miſchievous inferences* from, and by which *Scruples* may be put into the minds of *Sincere Chriſtians*; I have therefore ſent you ſuch ſhort remarks as upon reading the Book have occurred to me, and as I hope may be of ſome uſe to others on this Occaſion.

The

The Principal Propoſitions which our Author maintains, and which I thought moſt to deſerve conſideration, are theſe three.

Firſt, That *the Books aſcribed to the Diſciples and Companions of the Apoſtles, which are ſtill extant, and at this time thought genuine, and of great Authority; ſuch as the Epiſtle of* Clemens *to the* Corinthians, *the Epiſtles of* Ignatius, *the Epiſtle of* Polycarp *to the* Philippians, *the Paſtor of* Hermas, *and the Epiſtle of* Barnabas; (for about the reſt which he mentions, there is no great Controverſie;) *are all very eaſily proved to be ſpurious, and fraudulently impoſed upon the credulous.* Pag. 38, 39.

Secondly, That *'tis the eaſieſt task in the world, to ſhew the ignorance and ſuperſtition of the Writers of theſe Books*: That *Barnabas* has *many ridiculous paſſages*; pag. 38. pag. 45.

and by *saying that the Apostles before their Conversion were the greatest sinners in nature, robs us of an argument we draw from their integrity and simplicity against Infidels*: That *the Pastor of* Hermas *is the silliest Book in the World*: And
pag. 46. that *Ignatius* says, *the Virginity of* Mary *was a secret to the Devil*; which, I suppose, he cites as a ridiculous saying.

Thirdly, That *they who think* these Books *genuine*, ought to *receive them into the Canon of Scripture, since* the reputed Authors of them *were the Companions and fellow-labourers of the Apostles, as well as St.* Mark, *or St.* Luke, which is the *only reason* he *ever heard of*,
pag. 48. why *these two* Evangelists are thought *Inspired*. For *to say that these Books ought not to be received now into the Canon, because the Ancients did not think fit to approve them*,

them, is but a mere evasion; since *many Books now received as Canonical, were not approved by the Ancients*; *and some received by the Ancients*, are now *rejected by the Moderns*; and *Mr. Dodwel* owns, that anciently *no difference was put by the Church between the Apocryphal and Canonical Books of the New Testament*: and besides, *no stress can be laid on the Testimony of the Fathers*; since they *not only contradict one another, but are often inconsistent with themselves in their relations of the very same facts*; were divided into *various Sects*, who *in those early days did, like us, condemn one another for damnable Hereticks*; used to *reason precariously*, (*as* Irenæus *the famous Successor of the Apostles*, argues from the *four Regions of the World, and the four Winds, that there cannot be more nor fewer than four Gospels*)

pag. 57.

pag. 73.

pag. 80.

pag. 56.

p. 50, 51.

and give hard names to those who contemn such *precarious reasoning.*

These are the principal Assertions of our Author, which because they seem to me not only to be false, but also to be proposed with too bold a liberty of passing censures upon the judgment both of the ancient and modern Church; I shall therefore in answer to them, and for a Vindication of the Primitive Fathers and Modern Doctors of the Christian Church, with submission advance these three Propositions.

First, that though we are not infallibly certain, that the Epistles of *Clemens*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp* and *Barnabas*, with the Pastor of *Hermas*, are Genuine; yet that they are generally believed to be so, upon very *great Authority*, and

and with very *good Reason.*

Secondly, That therefore, though they are not received as of the same Authority with the Canonical Books of the New Testament, yet they ought to have a *proportionable Veneration* paid to them, both with respect to the *Authors* and to the *Writings* themselves.

Thirdly, That neither the Belief of the Genuineſs of theſe Books, nor the Reſpect paid to them as ſuch, does in the leaſt *diminiſh from the Authority of the New Teſtament*, or tend to *make the number of the Canonical Books Uncertain or Precarious.*

I. *Firſt*, That though we are not infallibly certain that the Epiſtles of *Clemens*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp* and *Barnabas*, with the Paſtor of *Hermas*, are Genuine; yet that they are generally believed to be ſo, upon very *great Authority*, and

and with very *good Reason.*

1. The Epistle of *Clemens* to the *Corinthians*, a * *great and wonderful Epistle*, saith *Eusebius*, was *unanimously and without any controversie received* by the antient Church; and † *read publickly in most Churches, both antiently, and in his time.* And that the Epistle now extant is the same with that which was so commended by the Antients, has not been questioned by any Learned Man these many years, and has been lately proved at large by the Learned *Doctor Wake* in his *Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*, and by *Grabius* in his *Spicilegium*, p. 261. whom I shall not now transcribe.

* Τούτου δὲ ἐν τοῦ κλήμεντος ὁμολογουμένη μία ἐπιστολὴ φέρεται, μεγάλη τε καὶ θαυμαστά. *Euseb. Hist. l.* 3. *c.* 16.
Ἀνωμολογουμένη παρὰ πᾶσιν. *Id. l.* 3. *c.* 38.
Ἱκανωτάτη γραφὴ. *Id. l.* 5. *c.* 6. *ex Irenæo, l.* 3. 3. *c.* 3.

† Ταύτην δὲ καὶ ἐν πλείσταις ἐκκλησίαις ἐπὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ δεδημοσιευμένην πάλαιτε καὶ καθ' ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἔγνωμεν. *Id. l.* 3. *l.* 16.

2. That *Ignatius* wrote several Epistles,

Epistles *, one to the *Ephesians*, one to the *Magnesians*, one to the *Trallians*, one to the *Romans*, one to the *Philadelphians*, one to the *Smyrnæans*, and one to *Polycarp*; *Eusebius* expresly testifies; quoting a large passage out of his *E*pistle to the *Romans*, which passage is now extant word for word in that *E*pistle, being published with the rest above-mentioned. And that all the *E*pistles now extant under these Titles, are the same with those mentioned by the Antients; is sufficiently proved by the very Learned Bishop *Pierson* in his *Vindiciæ*, *Cotelerius*, and others.

* Μίαν μὲν ἐπιστολὴν τῇ κατὰ τὴν Ἔφεσον ἐκκλησίᾳ γράφει, —— ἑτέραν δὲ τῇ ἐν Μαγνησίᾳ, —— καὶ τῇ ἐν Τράλλεσι δὲ ἄλλην, —— πρὸς ταύταις καὶ τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίᾳ γράφει, —— τοῖς τε ἐν Φιλαδελφίᾳ ἄνθις διὰ γραφῆς ὁμιλεῖ, —— καὶ τῇ Σμυρναίων ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἰδίως τε τῷ ταύτης προηγουμένῳ Πολυκάρπῳ. *Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 36.*

3. The *E*pistle of *Polycarp* to to the *Philippians*, is mentioned by † *Irenæus* that knew him living, and by *Eusebius*,

† *Lib. 3. c. 3.*

* *Hist. l. 3. c. 36.* † *In Catalogo, &c.*

* *Eusebius*, † *Hierom* and others, whose Testimonies I need not transcribe: And that set down at large by *Cotelerius* the *Epistle* now extant under his Name, at least the greatest part of it, is the Genuine one, is acknowledged by * all Writers eminent for Judgment and Learning.

* See Dr. *Wakes* Genuine Epistles, and *Coteler.* not. 1. in Epistolas Ignatii.

4. The Pastor of *Hermas* is incontestably a most antient work, being cited by almost all the Primitive Fathers extant, that lived in or near the second Century; *viz.* by † *Irenæus*, by * *Tertullian*, by † *Origen*, by *Clem. Alexand.* &c. whose Testimonies are set down at large by *Nicol. de Nourry* at the end of his *Apparatus ad Bibliothecam maximam veterum Patrum*, and præfixed

† *L. 2. & 4. & 6.*
* *De Orat. c. 12. & de Pudic.*
† *Hom. 8. num. lib. 1, 2. & 3. de Princip. Comment. in Mat. Hom. 37. in Luc. multisq; aliis in locis.*

præfixed to the *Oxford* Edition of *Hermas*, and to that of *Cotelerius*. Whether the Author of this book be the same *Hermas* that is mentioned by *St. Paul*, though it is affirmed by many of the best and most judicious writers, yet is it not so certain, nor of such consequence, that we should be obliged to defend it.

5. The Epistle of *Barnabas* is also without controversie antient, a work of the Apostolick Age, being quoted by almost all the * Primitive Fathers; as you may see by the Testimonies set down at large, in all the same Authors with the Testimonies concerning *Hermas*.

* *Clem. Alex. Strom.* 2. & *Strom.* 5. *Origen. contra Cels. lib.* 6, *&c.*

Upon these *great Authorities* then, though we cannot be absolutely sure that these Writings are Genuine, yet we may well conclude

clude and believe them to be ſo, notwithſtanding the ſuſpitions which ſome have raiſed to the contrary. There are alſo ſundry other Arguments, which may be drawn from the ſimplicity of the ſtile and way of arguing uſed in theſe Writings, agreeable to the cuſtom of the Age in which they are ſuppoſed to be written; from the conformity of the matters contained in them, to the Doctrine and Diſcipline of thoſe times; and from the exact Agreement of all the Quotations of the moſt antient Authors, to the Copies extant at this day: All which taken together, afford ſo *good Reaſon* to believe theſe Books to be genuine, that whoſoever conſiders them, may very well wonder at the confidence of Mr. *T.* who is pleaſed to affirm that *'tis the eaſieſt Task in the World to prove all theſe Writings*

tings ſpurious, and fraudulently impoſed upon the credulous.

II. *Secondly*, Though theſe Writings are not received as of the ſame Authority with the Canonical Books of the New Teſtament, yet ought they to have a *proportionable Veneration* paid to them, both with reſpect to the *Authors* and to the *Writings* themſelves.

Clemens was a Companion of the Apoſtles, and *Ignatius* and *Polycarp* their immediate Succeſſors; and if the Authors of the Epiſtle of *Barnabas* and of the Paſtor of *Hermas* were not the ſame with the Fellow-Labourers and Contemporaries of the Apoſtles, known by thoſe Names, yet are they ſo undeniably antient, (being certainly of the firſt Age,) as to challenge all the reſpect that can poſsibly be due to any Writers upon the account

account of Antiquity. And as to the Writings themſelves, though *Mr. T.* will not be perſuaded to grant with the Learned *Dr.* † *Wake*, that *they contain the true and pure Faith of Chriſt, without the leaſt Errour intermixt with it*; yet this we may be bold to affirm, that in general they are ſo far from betraying either the *Ignorance* or *Superſtition* of their Authors, which *Mr. T.* ſo confidently charges them with, that they contain a very good account of *that Doctrine and Dicipline* of the pureſt ages of the Church, *which* all learned and good Chriſtians heartily wiſh could be reſtored at this day.

† In his Diſcourſe of the Authority of the genuine Epiſtles, *p.* 175.

1. The Epiſtle of *Clemens* is ſtiled by *Euſebius*, (as I have already obſerved) *a great and admirable Epiſtle*; and was publickly read in the Chriſtian Churches both

both before and in his time: "And "indeed it does not at all come "short of the highest Praises which "the Ancients have given to it; "being a Piece composed with "such an admirable spirit of Love "and Charity; of Zeal towards "God, and of concern for the "Church; of the most excellent "exhortations delivered with the "greatest plainness and simplicity "of speech, and yet pressed many "times with such moving elo- "quence too; that I cannot ima- "gin what could have been de- "sired in such an Epistle, more "proper for the end for which it "was composed; what could have "been written more becoming an "Apostolical age, and the Pen of "one of the most eminent Bishops "of it. Thus the Learned Dr. *Wake*.

His making the *Scarlet thread* hung out by *Rahab* to the Spies, a Type of the *Blood* of *Chriſt*; however it may poſſibly ſeem ſtrange to ſuch as Mr. *T.* was yet in the Opinion of the Ancients very agreeable to the Tenour of the Scripture, and particularly to that Type of the *Scarlet Wool*, wherewith the Blood of the Sacrifice was ſprinkled on the People under the Law, *Heb.* 9. 19.

The Hiſtory of the *Phœnix*, mentioned in this Epiſtle, is confeſſedly a Fable. But he that conſiders that it was a Story at that time generally told and believed, as *Tacitus* largely relates; and that the beſt of Men never had any aſſurance of being preſerved from vulgar and innocent Errors; will not be haſty in cenſuring an excellent Man, and an excellent Book, for making ſuch a vulgar error

error the Topick of a Popular Argument.

2. The Epistles of *Ignatius* are written indeed in a plain, simple, and unaffected stile; as are most of the Books of the Holy Scripture it self: but, whatever Mr. *T.* says, there is nothing in them either of *ignorance* or *Superstition*; unless a *Firm belief of Divine Revelation* must be esteemed *Ignorance*, and a *strict Observance of the Laws of Christ* is to be called *Superstition*.

One Passage indeed there is in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, which Mr. *T.* cannot but smile at: *viz.* that *the Virginity of* Mary *and her delivery, was kept in secret from the Prince of this World.* But he that considers the manner of our Saviour's temptation, and how the Ancients constantly, and (in the

judgment of the very Learned * *Grotius*) not without good Grounds, denied the Devil to have known any thing at first of the great Mystery of the Incarnation, will not for this passage condemn *Ignatius* of *Ignorance*.

* Sanè Diabolum majus aliquid homine in Christo agnovisse hoc quidem tempore, constanter, *nec sine magnis argumentis*, negant Scriptores antiqui. *Grot.* in Mat. 4. 3.

3. The Epistle of *Polycarp* to the *Philippiaus* is a very valuable Monument of Antiquity, containing nothing in it unworthy the Character of so great a Father. * *Irenæus* calls it *a most compleat Epistle; out of which they that are careful of their own Salvation; may learn what was the Belief of* that Apostolical Man, *and what the form of sound Doctrine which he delivered in his Preaching.*

* Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐπιστολὴ Πολυκάρπου πρὸς Φιλιππησίους γεγραμμένη, ἱκανωτάτη ἐξ ἧς καὶ τὴν χαρακτῆρα τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα τῆς ἀληθείας, οἱ φροντίζοντες τῆς ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίας δύνανται μαθεῖν. Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c. 14. ex Irenæo.

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4. The Paſtor of *Hermas* is a Book full of very excellent Moral Inſtructions, delivered for the the moſt part in eaſie and natural Similitudes; and theſe alſo explained at large to the apprehenſion of the meaneſt capacities: For which reaſon, though it was not received into the Canon of Scripture, yet (as *Euſebius* teſtifies) it * *was judged by the Ancients a moſt neceſſary Book, eſpecially for thoſe who were to be inſtructed in the firſt Principles of Religion; and was therefore accordingly read in Churches:* And *Origen* (who was far from being an *ignorant* Man) judges it to be a * *moſt uſeful Book.* But Mr. *T.* ſaith it is *the ſillieſt Book in the World.* Why he ſhould think ſo, I cannot apprehend, unleſs it be becauſe there are here

* Πρὸς μὲν τινων ἀντιλελέκται, δι' οὓς οὐκ ἂν ἐν ὁμολογουμένοις τεθείη ὑφ' ἑτέρων δ' ἀναγκαιότατον, οἷς μάλιστα δεῖ στοιχειώσεως εἰσαγωγικῆς, κέκριται· ὅθεν ἤδη καὶ ἐν ἐκκλησίαις ἴσμεν αὐτὸ δεδημοσχουμένον. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 3.

* In Rom. 16, 14.

and there some few odd Passages scattered in it, very different from our modern way of Writing, which perhaps he can single out and expose; And so there is hardly any Book extant in the World, which a witty Man may not turn into ridicule.

All the Objections which I think have been hitherto made to this Book, are these: That * *it contains fabulous Visions*: That *it makes too much for Free-will*: That *it assigns to every Man two Angels*: That *it favours the* Novations *in allowing but one Repentance*: That *it favours Monkish Solitude*: and, that *it speaks of Purgatory*. The three first of these Objections we shall consider immediately; But the three latter are so *directly false*, that one would wonder

* Libri *fabulosi* sunt, in quibus contra Apostolicum consensum adstruitur *Liberum Arbitrium, una Panitentia, Solitudo Monastica*, &, quod memoratu dignum, purgatorium ab anu quâdam in visione tertiâ profertur. *Scultetus de Script. Apoch.*

wonder how prejudice could poſſibly be ſo ſtrong as to make Men ſee in any Author thoſe things, of which there is not the *leaſt ſyllable or hint* in the whole Book.

That the *Viſions* contained in it are *fabulous*, we ought not to ſay, unleſs we be ſure, either that God never afforded any Viſions to the firſt Chriſtians; or that theſe Viſions have ſome particular Circumſtances, which prove that they could not come from God. But if it were ſo, yet taking that which is uſed in this Book to be no other than a Parabolical way of Writing, wherein the Church is introduced as repreſenting its own Doctrine and Diſcipline to a Perſon in a Viſion, it ought not to be ſtiled fabulous, any more than * other Books of that kind which are written in our Age.

* Parable of the Pilgrim. of the Prodigal, &c.

That maintaining the *freedom* of Mans *Will*, in the ſenſe that *Hermas* aſſerts it, is a good Objection againſt a Book, I ſuppoſe neither Mr. *T.* nor any Man elſe, at this time of day, will contend.

That *Hermas* aſſigns *to every particular Man two Angels*, if the Titles of the Chapters were of any Authority, could not indeed be queſtioned. But in the Book it ſelf there is no ſuch thing *expreſly* affirmed: All that the Author there ſays, is only in general, That ★ *there are two Angels with Man; one of Righteouſneſs, the other of Iniquity*; and that *when good thoughts ariſe in a Mans heart, then the Angel of Righteouſneſs* (that is, ſome good ſpirit) *is with him*; *and when evil thoughts ariſe in his heart, then the Angel of Iniquity*, (that is, ſome evil ſpirit) *tempts*

★ Duo ſunt nuntii cum homine; unus æquitatis, & unus iniquitatis. *Mandat.* 6.

tempts him: Which perhaps is no more, than what all Christians believe. So that *Cotelerius* in his Notes upon the place, might have spared the pains of proving other Fathers to have been of the same opinion with *Hermas*, till he had shown that these words do *necessarily* signifie that *Hermas* himself was of that Opinion.

That *Hermas* by allowing *but One Repentance* for great and scandalous Crimes, favours the *Novatians*, whose Heresie consisted in allowing *no* other *Repentance at all*, than that of *Baptism*, is so far from being true, that he in express words opposes his *One Repentance* to *Baptism*, and says more for the validity and efficacy of that after-Repentance for Crimes committed by Baptized Christians, in this one little Book, than perhaps is to be found in all the other Writers of

of the three first Centuries put together; insomuch that *Tertullian*, after he turned *Montanist*, and had embraced the Opinion of the *Novatians*,* exclaims with all imaginable bitterness against this Book for that very reason, because it was more favourable than any other Book then extant, in allowing Repentance to Adulterers after Baptism, which the *Novatians* denied.

* Cederem tibi, si scriptura Pastoris, quæ sola mœchos amat, non ab omni concilio Ecclesiarum inter Apocrypha & falsa judicaretur, adultera & ipsa, & inde patrona sociorum. *De Pudicitia.*

That this Book favours *Monkish Solitude*, is also so far from being true, that on the contrary it even expresly allows † *Second Marriages*, which was more than most Writers of that Age were willing to do.

† *Mandat.* 4.

Lastly, So far is this Writer from establishing the Doctrine of *Purgatory*, that there is not *one syllable.*

ſyllable about it in the whole Book: All the places where he ſpeaks of Mens undertaking many hardſhips, and ſo *purging* themſelves from their ſins, being as plainly meant of the Penances to be gone through, according to the then eſtabliſhed Diſcipline of the Church, as 'tis poſſible for any thing to be expreſſed by words.

5. The Epiſtle of *Barnabas* was very much eſteemed among the Antients: And though it muſt indeed be confeſſed, that it contains ſome very ſtrange and allegorical Interpretations of Scripture; yet he that conſiders how much that manner of Interpretation was antiently in uſe among the Jews in their Targums, and how many important truths were that way conveyed, ſo that the Apoſtles themſelves

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in their arguing with the Jews did often make use of it, as we see in their uncontroverted Writings; I say whosoever considers these things, will rather chuse modestly to suspend his Judgment, than rashly to upbraid this Author with the Terms of foolish and *ridiculous*.

And as to his saying that *the Apostles before their Conversion were the greatest sinners in nature*; this does not at all *rob us of the Argument we use to draw from their Integrity and Simplicity against Infidels*. For supposing them to have been never so wicked, were they the less *Simple and Illiterate* for that? Or is their Wickedness before their Conversion any way inconsistent with their Integrity after it? But besides, these Words might be spoken with relation to such sins, as though very great

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in themſelves, yet ſincere and well-meaning Men might be guilty of in their Ignorance; as St. *Paul* ſays of himſelf, that before his Converſion he was the *chief of ſinners*, in reſpect of his blaſphemming Chriſt and perſecuting Chriſtians even to Death, for Chriſt's ſake.

In ſhort, though it muſt after all be confeſt, that the Authors of theſe Writings uſed a plain, popular and unpolite Stile; that they were guilty of ſome Miſtakes, in things wherein the whole world at that time erred with them; (for which Mr. *T.* is pleaſed to ſtile them *Ignorant*;) and that they delivered divers things, which tho' very agreeable to the ſtrictneſs of their Diſcipline in the Primitive Church, yet the preſent times will not ſo well bear; (for which Mr. *T.* calls them *Superſtitious*;) Tho' I ſay, all this muſt be granted;

yet

yet ſince in general the Matter of theſe Writings is ſuch, that not only the Ancients thought fit to cite them in their Books and read them in their Churches, but alſo the Learnedſt and moſt Judicious Criticks of our own times, as well Laicks as thoſe of the Clergy, have received them as genuine, and recommended them as *containing the true and pure Faith of Chriſt*; I cannot but think that the very great ſcorn and contempt, wherewith Mr. *T.* hath thought fit to treat them, is a very bold aſſuming to himſelf, and undervaluing the Judgment of the greateſt Men both of the Ancient and Modern Church, and conſequently a Reflection upon our Religion its ſelf; and that after all, we have very *good Reaſon*, as well as very *great Authority*, though not to receive theſe Writings as of the

the ſame Authority with the Canonical Books of the New Teſtament, yet to pay them a *proportionable Veneration*, both with reſpect to the *Authors* and to the *Writings* themſelves.

III. *Thirdly*, Neither the Belief of the Genuineneſs of theſe Writings, nor the reſpect paid to them as ſuch, does in the leaſt diminiſh from the Authority of the New Teſtament, or tend to make the number of the Canonical Books uncertain or precarious.

This is the difficulty, on which Mr. *T.* ſeems particularly to inſiſt, as if it were impoſſible for thoſe who believe the Genuïneneſs of theſe Writings to give any tolerable reaſon why they do not admit them into the Canon of the New Teſtament, as well as ſeveral

ral others, which are now receiv'd: And therefore I ſhall indeavour to be ſomewhat more exact and particular in giving an Anſwer to it.

1. Firſt then, tho' we have great Reaſon to believe theſe Books to be Genuine, yet have we not the ſame *certainty* of it, as we have of the Genuineneſs of the Books receiv'd into the Canon of the N. Teſtament. The Books of the *New Teſtament*, as it might be proved of every one of them particularly, were received at their firſt coming forth as being written by Divine Inſpiration, and were quoted as ſuch by *Irenæus* and others of the Ancienteſt Fathers: And though upon occaſion of ſome Diſputes that aroſe afterwards among Chriſtians, the Authority of ſome few of thoſe Books came to be called in Queſtion; (not to ſpeak at

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present of those Hereticks, the *Cerinthians*, *Marcionites*, *Manichees*, and others, who rejected whatsoever made against their absurd Opinions;) yet those few Questioned Books were so far from being (as Mr. *T.* falsely asserts) *rejected a long time by all Christians almost with universal consent*, that even those Books were not only kept entire from the beginning, but (as *Eusebius* expresly testifies) were * owned by *most* Doctors of the Church, and were all along read together with the other Scriptures; and at last, upon the full and exact examination of all Circumstances, the matter being put out of Question, they were unanimously received, as well by those Churches where they were doubted before, as by

* Γνωρίμων δ' οὖν ὅμως τοῖς πολλοῖς. —— ὅμως δὲ καὶ πλείστοις τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν γεγνωσκομένας. *Hist. l.3.c.25.*

Πέτρου δευτέραν, οὐκ ἐνδιάθηκον μὲν εἶναι παρειλήφαμεν, ὅμως δὲ πολλοῖς χρήσιμος φανεῖσα, μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐσπουδάσθη γραφῶν. *lib. 3. c. 3.*

all other Christian Churches, into the Canon of Scripture; and so have been continued ever since by universal consent, and by the uninterrupted Succession of Christians in all Ages. Whereas of those Writings which we are now speaking of, that which is the least controverted, *viz.* the Epistle of *Clemens*, was for many Ages thought to be utterly lost: and though upon its appearing again, the best Criticks in the World thought they had *good reason* to pronounce it *Genuine*; yet they could not be so sure that it was free from corruption and interpolation, as we are of those Writings which were never lost. And now this Argument is of peculiar force against Mr. *T.* For if he thinks, as he says, that he can with all the ease in the World prove these Writings spurious; (which notwith-

withſtanding his vain boaſt, he will never be able to perform;) he may at leaſt allow thoſe, who do not doubt but they are Genuine, yet not to advance them above their own rank, and place them among thoſe which by the Univerſal Church have been received into the Canon of the New Teſtament.

2. *Secondly*, Though the matter of theſe Writings be ſuch, as that they do therefore deſerve very great veneration and reſpect; yet is there plainly ſomething *humane*, ſomething of *infirmity*, ſomething of *fallibility* in them, for which they are with all reaſon thought inferior to the Writings of the Apoſtles. And this Argument is alſo peculiarly ſtrong againſt Mr. *T.* For if he thinks, as he ſays, that he can with all the eaſe in the

World ſhow the *Ignorance* and *Superſtition* of the Authors of theſe Writings; well may he allow thoſe, who ſo far differ from him in this, as to think they deſerve the high Character of Primitive, Holy, and Apoſtolical Men, yet not to preſume to equal them with the Apoſtles themſelves.

3. *Thirdly*, When we have made the beſt judgment of things, that we can poſſibly at this diſtance of time, we cannot after all but pay ſome deference to the judgment of the Ancients, eſpecially when aſſembled in a Council; and allow them to judge ſomewhat better in the Ages next after our Saviour, what Writings were of Authority to be made the Standard and Rule of Faith, than we can after 1700 hundred years: Eſpecially ſince of the doubted Books,

Books, which were ſometime read promiſcuouſly with the uncontroverted, 'tis plain they received ſuch only into the Canon, whoſe ſtile, and matter, and agreement with the reſt of the Apoſtolical Writings, do ſufficiently prove them to have judged wiſely and upon good Grounds. But this Argument is of no force with Mr. *T.*

4. *Fourthly*, Therefore, and which is a direct deciſion of this Queſtion, I add, that the true reaſon why ſuch a certain and determinate number of Writings are received as the Canon of Scripture, that is, as an Authoritative Rule of Faith and Manners, is becauſe they were *written by the Apoſtles themſelves*, (who are acknowledged to have been guided by an infallible Spirit,) or which is all one,

were *dictated, reviewed and approved by them or some of them.* All the Books of the New Testament, except the Gospels of St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, are therefore received as Canonical, because the Church upon undoubted Grounds believes them to be *written immediately by the Apostles themselves*; and these three Books are therefore received as Canonical likewise, because we believe them to have been *dictated, reviewed and approved by some of the Apostles.* And this is a plain and direct reason, though Mr. *T.* is so modest
pag. 48. to say *he never heard* of it, why the Writings of St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*, who were only Companions of the Apostles, are received among the Canonical Writings of the Apostles; and yet the Epistles of *Clemens* and *Barnabas*, who were

were Fellow-labourers with the Apoſtles, are not. And that this is indeed the true reaſon, why ſome Books are received as of infallible Authority, and others not; may be ſufficiently proved to any unprejudiced perſon, from what we find in the Ancients concerning this matter. That *all Books acknowledged to be written by the Apoſtles, were always received as of unqueſtionable Authority*, is evident. The Queſtion concerning any doubted Book, being, not whether the Writing of an Apoſtle ſhould be received as of good Authority or not, but whether that Writing ſaid to be an Apoſtle's, were indeed the Writing of him whoſe name it bore. That *the reaſon why the Writings of St.* Mark *and St.* Luke *were always received as of certain Authority*, was not becauſe they were Contemporaries

with the Apostles, (for so were *Clemens* and *Hermas*, and *Barnabas*,) but *because* their Writings were particularly approved and authorized by the Apostles, is plain from *Eusebius*; who tells us expresly that St. *Peter* received and approved the Gospel of St. *Mark*, and that * *it was this approbation that authorized it to be received by the Churches*: In like manner, † *That St.* John *reviewed all the Gospels, and confirmed the truth of them*: *Irenæus* likewise tells us * that *what St.* Mark *wrote, was dictated by St.* Peter; and that † *the Gospel of St.* Luke *was only a Transcript of St.* Paul's *Preaching*: St. *Paul* himself plainly refers to it, 1 *Cor.* 15. 5. where declaring

* Κυρῶσαί τε τὴν γραφὴν εἰς ἔντευξιν τῶν ἐκκλησίαις. *l.* 2. *c.* 15.

† Ἤδη δὲ Μάρκου καὶ Λουκᾶ τῶν καθ' αὐτὸς ἐυαγγελίων τὴν ἔκδοσιν ποιησάμενον, Ἰωάννην — ἀποδέξασθαι μέν φασιν, ἀλήθειαν αὐτοῖς ὀπιμαρτυρήσαντα. *l.* 3. *c.* 24.

* *Marcus* discipulus & interpres *Petri*, quæ à *Petro* annunciata erant, edidit. *lib.* 3. *cap.* 1.

† *Lucas* sectator *Pauli*, quod ab illo prædicabatur, Evangelium in Libro condidit. *Ibid.*

claring unto the *Corinthians* the Gospel which he had before Preached, he puts them in mind *how that Christ rose from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that he was seen of Cephas, &c.* which appearance of our Saviour to *Peter*, is no where mentioned but in Saint *Luke*'s Gospel, *Luke* 24. 34.

And in the first Epistle to *Timothy* 5. 18 he quotes it with the *express Title of* Scripture; *The Scripture saith, The Labourer is worthy of his Hire*; which words are no where found in Scripture, but in St. *Luke*'s Gospel, *Luke* 10. *v.* 7. So that 'tis not without great reason, that Learned Men have judged it to be St. *Luke*'s Gospel, which the Apostle calls *his own Gospel*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 8. and elsewhere. And then for the *Acts of the Apostles*, 'tis plain they are an Account of St. *Paul*'s Travels, * written before

* Baron. ad ann. 61.

before his Death; so that they are with all reason believed to have been approved by him; and if they were not, yet * being anciently the same Book with the Gospel of St. *Luke*, they were undoubtedly reviewed by *St. John*, together with it, and their Authority was hardly ever, that I know of, called in question by any, but † *Marcion* the Heretick. Lastly, *That no other Books, however written by the Contemporaries of the Apostles were received by the Ancients as of infallible and decisive Authority in matters of Dispute*, is evident. *Eusebius* tells us expresly that the Authority of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was questioned by some, not because they doubted whether it was written

* Sunt enim Acta δόκιμα ejus operis λόγου cujus πρῶτον λόγον ipse suum agnoscit Evangelium. Acta postea ab Evangelio divulserunt, quibus commodius visum, ob locorum faciliorem expeditioremque invicem comparationem, Evangelistas separato codice complecti, & ab Actis secernere. *Dodwell.* Dissertat. 1. in *Irenæum.*

† Vid. *Tertull.* adversus Marcion. lib. 5. sub. initio.

ten in the Age of the Apostles, (for that they could not not,) but * because the Church of *Rome* thought it not to be written by *St. Paul*. The Pastor of *Hermas* also (as † the same Author tells us) was esteemed so much as to be read publickly in Churches and yet never received as of infallible Authority: Nay *Origen* goes farther, & thinks it to be not only a *useful* Book, but written * even with some degree of Inspiration; and yet † imposes it not upon any one to be received as Scripture.

* Τινὲς ἠθετήκασι τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους, πρὸς τὸ Γωμαίων ἐκκλησίας ὡς μὴ Παύλου οὖσαν αὐτὴν ἀντιλέγεσθαι φήσαντες. lib. 3. cap. 3.

† Idem ibidem.

* Quæ scriptura valdè mihi utilis videtur, &, ut puto, divinitus inspirata. *Origen.* in Rom. 16 14.

† Si cui tamen Scriptura illa recipienda videtur. *Origen.* Hom. 8. in *Num.*

In like manner the Epistle of *Clemens*, though the most unquestionable Piece in all Antiquity, and (as *Eusebius* Stiles it) * ἀνωμολογημένη παρὰ πᾶσι, yet it is by the same

* *Lib.* 3. *c.* 38.

† *Lib.* 6. *c.* 13.

ſame Author † elſewhere reckoned up among the Apocryphal Pieces: that is, as *Cotelerius* well obſerves, not that any one doubted of its Genuineneſs or Excellency, but only that they would not reckon it among the Books τῆς θείας γραφῆς, to which *Euſebius* there oppoſes it.

The Truth is, the unqueſtioned Works of the Apoſtles were not anciently (as Mr. *Dodwel* confeſſes) kept in a diſtinct Book from the Apocryphal, but read and cited promiſcouſly with the Works of their immediate Succeſſors: But then 'tis alſo certain, that as unqueſtioned Works of the Apoſtles, *whenever* they were cited, were looked upon by all as infallible and deciſive; ſo the other Pieces, whilſt they were quoted and urged by ſome, might as freely be denied or not yielded to by others.

Vainly

Vainly therefore doth Mr. *T.* object, *That they who believe the Epiſtle of* Clemens *and* the reſt *to be genuine, cannot give any reaſon why they do not admit it into the Canon of Scripture.* And as falſly does he inſinuate, that the Eſtabliſhment of that Canon is uncertain and precarious. Could it be proved, *That the Epiſtles of* James *and of* Peter, *and of* Jude, *or any of them, were not written by thoſe whoſe Names they bear*; we ſhould indeed be obliged to reject them: And could the *Preaching* and *Revelation of Peter* be proved to be genuine, we ſhould be obliged to receive them into the Canon of the New Teſtament. But ſo far is it from being true, That the *Preaching and Revelation of Peter* were *ſo* receiv'd by the Ancients, as by more than *a parity of Reaſon*, to claim admiſſion into the Canon

non with his ſecond Epiſtle, and the reſt of the ſome time queſtioned Books, that on the contrary theſe Pieces (beſides the arguments that may be drawn from the Writings themſelves) were received by ſo few of the Ancients, as to make * *Euſebius* think, (though in that indeed he was miſtaken,) that they vvere never quoted by any of the Ancients at all.

*Τὸν τε λεγόμενον αὐτοῦ κήρυγμα, καὶ τὴν καλουμένην ἀποκάλυψιν, οὐδ' ὅλως ἐν καθολικοῖς ἴσμεν παραδεδομένα. Ὅτι μήτε ἀρχαίων, μήτε τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς τις ἐκκλησιαστικὸς συγγραφεὺς, ταῖς ἐξ αὐτῶν συνεχρήσατο μαρτυρίαις. *Hiſt. l. 3. c. 3.*

What Mr. *T.* has invidiouſly urged about the Diviſions among the Fathers, and their want of exactneſs in their Reaſonings, I ſuppoſe will not move thoſe, who know that Truth is never the leſs ſuch for being ſurrounded with a multitude of Errors; and that Men did not then write in a Nice and Scholaſtick way, but in a plain and unpolite Stile, mixing

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Arguments, Similitudes and *Illuſtrations* promiſcouſly, which is the way of repreſenting things popularly, and to mean Capacities.

Thus I have indeavoured to give a ſhort Anſwer to the Difficulties *which Mr.* T. *has with great freedom propoſed: Hoping that what I have here very briefly and with Submiſſion hinted, may give occaſion to ſome abler and more learned Pen, to treat of this Matter with that largeneſs and clearneſs, with which ſo great a* Point *well deſerves to be handled.*

I am, Sir,

Yours.

FINIS.

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